

CHARTWATCH

DENISE CARUSO

INSIDE SILICON VALLEY



Apple abuzz over firing of programmer

ZOOM WHOM? Brows are furrowed at Apple Computer since the firing of **David Ramsey**, the programmer accused of telling Apple "secrets" over the ether.

CompuServe, an on-line information service, was the scene of the crime where Ramsey supposedly leaked the supposedly confidential info.

Hundreds of messages on the subject have been posted since the poop hit the fan more than a week ago. Some Apple engineers are bionic over Ramsey's firing, saying he's a sacrificial lamb: Apple execs were humiliated when certain Apple employees still at large, calling themselves the **nuPrometheus League**, made headlines by mailing out a bunch of Apple's source code to trade magazines. Some think Ramsey's was a convenient head to lop.

Though Ramsey won't talk about specifics, he says he wasn't fired over information on Apple's new system software. He won't say more, except that the information had been published elsewhere, via "an executive that was quoted rather widely quite a few months ago." But, he says, "Apple maintains that executives are different from employees and they have different privileges."

Typical of Apple's willy-nilly approach to security, Ramsey's account on **AppleLink**, Apple's internal electronic mail system, is still active. "I was fired for a confidentiality breach, but I'm still getting updates on new unannounced products, as of (Wednesday) evening at about 6 p.m.," he said.

SO VERY HARD TO NO: It's been almost a year since I rushed the stage to get to **Andy Hertzfeld** at Macworld Expo in Boston. Hertzfeld, a member of the original Macintosh team (that's like being on the crew that drove the last spike into the transcontinental railroad), was asked during a panel discussion what he was working on and he said he was developing "the

world's greatest TV."

He wouldn't talk then, but last week he was invited to talk about the project at the **Multimedia Expo** at Moscone Center. Though he didn't say much there either, afterward he said the radical new TV is being built by a company called **FROX**, soon to move to Menlo Park. The product will use a SPARC chip.

Hertzfeld said the company is trying to keep a low profile, so he gave me the name of someone else to bother: **Hartmut Esslinger**, founder and president of **FROX** (the X is for multiple copies, like the X in Xerox) and founder of **frogdesign**, the firm that designed the look of the Macintosh and the NeXT Computer System and about a million other sleek high-tech products.

Esslinger says he's been working two years on the project, a little more than a year of it "day and night," but he's still shy on specifics. "I think it's too extreme to talk about yet," says Esslinger. He'd only add that it's not **HDTV**, a technology that he thinks is 10 years too late.


DO IT IN 3D: 3D computing has taken a turn toward the low end. **Jim Clark**, chairman and founder of 3D workstation firm **Silicon Graphics** in Mountain View, just joined the board of directors of **Paracomp**, a San Francisco software publisher.

Paracomp sells a package called **Swivel 3D** for **VPL Research**, the "virtual reality" firm, as well as other conceptual design and visualization programs. Company president **Bill Woodward** thinks Clark's presence will help Paracomp make 3D computing popular on less expensive computers like the Mac.

Swivel 3D and another Paracomp product, **Model Shop**, are "really easy" to use, especially compared with high-end 3D software, Woodward says.

NOMENCLATURE HACKING: The best product at Multimedia Expo was color-Xeroxed copies of **Mondo 2000** magazine, formerly called **Reality Hackers**. The magazine is looking for investors — "we want to invade mall culture," says "domineditrix" **Alison Kennedy** — so the name-change was necessary. "We had cult appeal before," says Kennedy. "But people didn't understand it, especially in the Midwest and on the East Coast. The word hacker has a distinct subtext of violence today, which we were never happy with." Some of the most amazing stories about technology I've ever seen are in this issue, but I won't tell you about them until next week. . . .

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